



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Santa Monica Mountains
National Recreation Area

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SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

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Solstice Canyon set to reopen June 20: Welcome Back!

After months of emergency stabilization and rehabilitation, the Solstice Canyon area of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA) will reopen to the public on Friday, June 20, 2008. The Corral Fire raged through the area on November 24, 2007, burning approximately 4,901 acres and over 100 buildings. Solstice Canyon remained closed due to visitor safety concerns.

With almost all of the vegetation burned from hillsides, a vast amount of soil and rock debris immediately began tumbling down. "The focus of our efforts has been to make certain the surroundings are as safe as possible for visitors before we reopened," said Woody Smeck, SMMNRA superintendent. "Restoring the trail system has taken a tremendous amount of effort," he continued. Once the rock-fall subsided, actions were taken to stabilize soils as well as repair roads and trails damaged by erosion. The remnants of six historic buildings were stabilized and hazardous materials were removed, including from the Keller House, the oldest recorded stonework structure in Malibu. Trees located near trails and weakened by the Corral Fire were assessed and removed where necessary. Culverts and channels were cleared to protect several bridges from the next high water flow.

An additional concern is the influx of non-native, invasive weeds. Fires open large areas of bare ground. With its long history of human disturbance, Solstice Canyon provides an ideal location for invasive plants to grow, smothering native species. If left unchecked, the area could lose much of its habitat value for wildlife and not filter or clean water efficiently. SMMNRA staff is using a variety of methods to remove invasive species and encourage native plant regeneration including: hand pulling, brush-cutting, herbicide application, native replanting, and mowing. Over 20 acres of habitat were treated to enhance post-fire native species regeneration; monitoring of these plots will continue throughout the summer.

The parking lots will be open daily from 8:00am to dusk. All dogs must be on a leash no longer than six feet. Motorized vehicles are not permitted beyond driveways and parking lots. Every precaution has been taken to provide for a safe visit; however, dangers, such as falling rocks, still exist. Please use caution.

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